

Conservation Agent Career



Serving nature and you®



MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

Conservation agents awarded with Missouri's highest public safety award — the Missouri Medal of Valor.



A Career as a Conservation Agent?

Are you looking to be part of something greater than yourself; to be part of a diverse team of professionals who find meaning and purpose in protecting Missouri's fish, forest, and wildlife resources; professionals who exemplify character, valor, and integrity? The Missouri Department of Conservation is looking for people willing to make a difference in their communities. If you feel the calling to be outdoors protecting our conservation heritage, and have the courage and desire to wear the badge and serve the citizens of Missouri with fairness and integrity, then a career as a conservation agent may be for you.



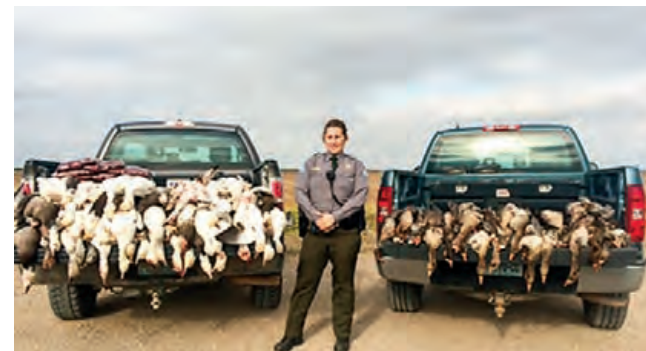
What Are Conservation Agents?

Conservation agents are local representatives of the Conservation Commission who have a broad knowledge of the Missouri Department of Conservation's many responsibilities.

Conservation agents are licensed peace officers. They enforce the rules of the *Wildlife Code of Missouri* and state laws on lands owned, leased or managed by the Conservation Department. Risks are involved in these law enforcement endeavors because violators are almost always armed, especially during hunting seasons. Agents are expected to work many nights, most weekends and holidays, and often under adverse weather conditions.

The benefits far outweigh the challenges. Agents have a certain amount of freedom in setting their work schedule. They have many opportunities to meet interesting people, perform an educational role, and work outdoors.

The duties of a conservation agent are almost always interesting and vary with the season. During warmer months, an agent may check fishing



Agents use the latest equipment and rely on citizen cooperation to investigate wildlife crimes.

permits, catch a violator operating an illegal net, or arrest a person who is using an electrical device to take fish illegally.

Duties related to hunting are generally performed during colder months. The workload and responsibilities are determined by the needs of the agent's assigned county. Some agents may primarily check waterfowl hunters, while others may work mostly with upland game hunters.

All counties in the state enjoy a whitetail deer population, and agents, working alone or teaming up with an aircraft patrol, investigate spotlighters illegally shooting deer at night. Patrol, investigations, and stakeouts are a normal part of the job, as is a certain amount of administrative work.

Conservation agents respond to the public through an intense public relations and educational program. Agents' success is measured by their performance of the following duties: contacts with resource users and landowners; holding meetings; conducting hunter safety and ethics instruction; appearing on radio and television programs; providing information at fairs and exhibits; writing newspaper articles; and providing programs for schools, clubs, and organizations.



Agents provide programs and outdoor skills clinics to civic groups, schools, and other organizations interested in conservation.



Agents visit with landowners individually and provide resource management assistance.

Management duties in wildlife, fisheries, and forestry are determined by the agent's assigned area. Wildlife management involves surveying wildlife populations, making landowner habitat improvement contacts, investigating wildlife damage complaints, and other wildlife-related duties. Duties in fisheries management include conducting pollution investigations, assisting in fish distribution, monitoring fish rescue efforts, advising landowners on lake and pond management, and other fisheries-related duties. Providing forestry development advice to private landowners and forest fire investigations are just a couple examples of the many responsibilities in forestry management.

The variety of duties and responsibilities conservation agents perform demands a high level of interest in people and in conservation. Along with law enforcement, community relations, education, and resource management, agents are also active in other Department affairs, including assisting in public land acquisition, helping select permit vendors, maintaining equipment, attending training, and providing emergency public services.

Conservation agents are provided uniforms and equipment, including the best possible firearms, radios, vehicles, and special enforcement equipment.

Much of the agents' work takes place outdoors, either working alone or as part of a team.



Agents use the media to inform the public about conservation issues.

Qualifications

Conservation agents must be 21 years old at the closing date for the job application. They must also have a bachelor's degree in one of the following areas: forestry, fisheries management, wildlife management, wildlife conservation, natural resources conservation law enforcement, criminal justice, agriculture, education with science or biology emphasis, or other related biological sciences or closely related natural resource subjects. They must possess a valid driver's license, or be able to obtain a valid Missouri driver's license by date of employment.

Applicants must be able to: learn to swim; lift a small boat, an outboard motor, or a canoe; and remove deer killed on Missouri highways. They must be able to work outdoors in extreme hot and cold weather, as well as snow and rain.

After successfully completing the selection process, a conditional offer of appointment as a conservation agent trainee is made. Applicants must successfully complete a physical fitness test, a psychological examination, and a drug test, which are paid for by the Department.

Conditions of Employment

To be appointed as a conservation agent, the applicant must agree to accept assignment anywhere in the state, successfully complete the agent training academy, and be willing to accept transfer to a new assignment when requested.

The newly appointed conservation agent is required to successfully complete a probationary period, which runs concurrently with the training period.



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Conservation Agent Training

Training consists of 26 weeks of intense instruction in all areas of responsibility. In addition to classroom hours, conservation agent trainees participate in physically demanding practical exercises.

These range from daily physical fitness training to hands-on operation of all types of equipment used in conservation agent work. Upon graduation from the academy, trainees also work special assignments in the field under the supervision of a veteran field training agent.

Courses in legal studies teach trainees constitutional and state law. Interpersonal perspective classes expose trainees to the knowledge they need to deal with the human side of fish, forest, and wildlife resource law enforcement. In addition, the program covers criminal investigations,

defensive tactics and firearms training. Throughout the program, trainees learn officer-safety techniques that will enable them to feel secure when they begin their permanent assignment in the field. Trainees receive technical instruction in fish, forest, and wildlife management, along with instruction on the knowledge and skills necessary to conduct effective informational and educational programs.

Upon successful completion of the training, the Missouri Department of Public Safety will issue a Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) License attesting that the trainee has completed 1,000 hours of licensed law enforcement training. The U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training also has certified the conservation agent training program.



Career Advancement and Benefits

Agents have the opportunity to advance to other positions within the Protection Division, including protection district supervisor, protection regional supervisor, protection programs specialist, protection programs supervisor, protection field chief, and protection division chief. In addition, agents have the opportunity to advance throughout the Department.

The current wage scale is available upon request. The Conservation Department provides the following employee benefits:

- Paid vacation
- Paid sick leave
- Paid holidays
- Group life insurance
- Group health insurance
- Workers' Compensation coverage
- Mail-order prescription drugs
- Long-term disability insurance
- Paid retirement programs
- Social Security coverage
- Cafeteria plan
- Deferred compensation program



How to Apply

Those interested in a career as a conservation agent are encouraged to contact their local agent and ask questions about the work. For more information, go to:

mdc.mo.gov

or write to:

Human Resources Division

Missouri Department of Conservation
PO Box 180
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0180



Protecting Missouri's
wildlife resources
requires work on the
land, in the water,
and in the air.



Missouri Conservation Agent's Oath

I do solemnly swear to protect and conserve Missouri's fish, forest and wildlife resources and to uphold the Constitution and the rules and regulations set forth by the Conservation Commission and the State of Missouri. I will never betray my badge and will serve the people of Missouri with fairness and integrity, without fear or favor.

Equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs of the Missouri Department of Conservation is available to all individuals without regard to their race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. Questions should be directed to the Department of Conservation, PO Box 180, Jefferson City, MO 65102, 573-751-4115 (voice) or 800-735-2966 (TTY), or to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Division of Federal Assistance, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Mail Stop: MBSP-4020, Arlington, VA 22203.